

Art Unit: 1700

Claims 1- 7 have been canceled.

Claim 8 (New): A method for producing a saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer, comprising:

- copolymerizing ethylene and vinyl acetate in a methanol solution to form an ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer having an ethylene content of at least 20 mol % but not more than 70 mol %,
- saponifying the copolymer in a methanol solution,
- adding water to the methanol solution containing the saponified copolymer to prepare a mixture solution,
- removing insoluble materials from the mixture solution, and
- obtaining the saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer from the mixture solution from which the insoluble materials have been removed.

Claim 9 (New): The method of Claim 8, wherein the mixture solution is an aqueous methanol solution with a ratio of methanol to water in the range of 5 : 5 to 9 : 1 by weight.

Claim 10 (New): The method of Claim 8, wherein the saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer obtained has a saponification degree of at least 95 mol %.

Claim 11 (New): The method of Claim 8, wherein the insoluble materials are removed from the mixture solution in which the concentration of the copolymer saponified is between 30 wt % and 60 wt %.

Claim 12 (New): The method of Claim 8, wherein the insoluble materials are removed from the mixture solution at a temperature between 55 °C and 80 °C.

Claim 13 (New): The method of Claim 8, wherein the insoluble materials comprise a polyvinyl alcohol having a saponification degree of at least 95 mol %, or a saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer having an ethylene content of not more than 10 mol % and a saponification degree of at least 95 mol %.

Claim 14 (New): The method of Claim 8, wherein the insoluble materials are removed by a filter or a centrifugal separator.

Claim 15 (New): The method of Claim 8, wherein the insoluble materials are removed using at least one solid-liquid separation method selected from filtration with a plate filter, filtration with a bucket filter, filtration with a candle filter or separation with a centrifugal separator.

Claim 16 (New): The method of Claim 8, wherein the insoluble materials are removed by a candle filter.

Claim 17 (New): The method of Claim 8, wherein the saponification is neutralized with acetic acid prior to the addition of water.

Claim 18 (New): The method of Claim 8, further comprising molding the saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer into a form by melt-molding.

Claim 19 (New): The method of Claim 8, further comprising mixing the saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer with a thermoplastic resin.

Claim 20 (New): The method of Claim 8, further comprising forming the saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer into a laminate by a method selected from coextrusion, coextrusion coating or solution coating.

Claim 21 (New): A method for producing a saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer, comprising:

copolymerizing ethylene and vinyl acetate in a methanol solution to form an ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer having an ethylene content of at least 20 mol % but not more than 70 mol %,

saponifying the copolymer in a methanol solution,

adding water to the methanol solution containing the copolymer saponified to prepare a mixture solution,

removing insoluble materials from the mixture solution, and

obtaining the copolymer saponified from the mixture solution from which the insoluble materials have been removed, and

wherein the insoluble materials are removed from the mixture solution in which the ratio of methanol to water is in the range of 5 : 5 to 9 : 1 by weight, and wherein the saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer obtained has a saponification degree of at least 95 mol %.

Claim 22 (New): The method of Claim 21, wherein the insoluble materials are removed by a filter or a centrifugal separator.

Claim 23 (New): The method of Claim 21, wherein the insoluble materials are removed using at least one solid-liquid separation method selected from filtration with a plate filter, filtration with a bucket filter, filtration with a candle filter or separation with a centrifugal separator.

Claim 24 (New): The method of Claim 21, wherein the insoluble materials are removed by a candle filter.

Claim 25 (New): The method of Claim 21, wherein the saponification is neutralized with acetic acid prior to the addition of water.

Claim 26 (New): The method of Claim 21, further comprising molding the saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer into a form by melt-molding.

Claim 27 (New): The method of Claim 21, further comprising mixing the saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer with a thermoplastic resin.

Claim 28 (New): The of method Claim 21, further comprising forming the saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer into a laminate by a method selected from coextrusion, coextrusion coating or solution coating.